

end of Life is, first Truth, then Death. Of the
 many souls
 within him, two, he predicted, would be
 among the last
 to perish, as his life ebbed away—one, the
 voice which
 cried even in his sick-room, 'It's fine today!';
 the other,
 the analysing, classifying observer, whose
 supreme plea-
 sure lay in discerning some new element in
 common
 between two states of mind.

Such is the philosophy that gives unity to
 this vast work
 which begins years before the author's birth
 and leaves
 him middle-aged. Such is the central theme
 that knits
 together its brilliant, but chaotic-seeming
 episodes—the
 loves, miserable alike in possession or
 frustration, of
 Charles Swann, of Gilberte, of Saint-Loup, of
 Albertine,
 of the Baron de Charlus; the slow dissolution
 of the magic
 circle of the Faubourg Saint Germain, the
 'encanaille-
 ment' of the House of Guermantes, which
 leaves its
 Princesse displaced by a shabby bourgeoisie,
 its Duchesse
 by a prostitute; and all the long havoc of the
 years which
 wither the beauty of Odette and the wit of
 Oriane, and
 change the great Palamede de Charlus to a
 timid old man
 baring a tremulous white head before the
 woman his
 arrogance had blistered with insults in other
 days. 'C'est
 avec une dureté presque triomphale qu'il
 repetait sur un
 ton uniforme, legerement begayant et aux
 sourdes reson-
 nances s^pulchrales: "Hannibal de Breauté,
 mort! An-
 toine de Mouchy, mort! Charles Swann,

mort! Adalbert
de Montmorency, mort! Baron de
Talleyrand, mort!
Sosthene de Doudeauville, mort!" Et chaque
fois, ce mot
"mort" semblait tomber sur ces defunts
comme une
pellet^e de terre plus lourde, lancee par un
fossoyeur qui
tenait a les river plus profondement a la
tombe.' Even
Swann, whom once we knew so well, is now
one with all
these others who are mere names to us, his
gravestone
lost in the ghastly whiteness of the
cemetery, amid the